

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter consists of background, problem statement, objectives, significance, and scope of the research.

A. Background

Language teaching methods play a significant role in EFL classroom in order to improve academic performance of students and enhance their communication competence. In the other words, students are able to use the target language in communication. As EFL students, classroom is a place for students to get the most language exposure. Therefore, teachers are expected to able to give comprehensible input during the teaching and learning process through encouraging them to more actively participate in the classroom.

Spratt *et al* (2005) argue that interaction becomes an important part in language teaching where students interact with the teacher and their classmates in learning English. To support this point, Brown (2007) defines interaction as the exchange of thoughts, feelings, and ideas which is conducted by two or more people, and mutual effect will be produced in both communicators.

Therefore as a language teacher, either as a foreign language or a second language teacher, interaction plays essential role in teaching and learning process.

Moreover, students' language proficiency can be improved through the interaction between the teacher and the students and among the students themselves (Richards and Lockhart 1996).

Thus, interaction happens in the classroom through teachers' effort and initiative. Teachers need to constantly engage and stimulate students to be actively involved and participated in classroom interaction. Furthermore, developing questioning techniques or strategies is one of techniques can be done to initiate and maintain interaction in the classroom (Katari, 2009).

Questioning is one of the most common techniques used in English language teaching. Supporting this view, Wood & Carol (2001) define that questioning is an effective skill to stimulate students' interaction, thinking, and learning. In addition, checking if the students understand what they have been taught, enhancing students' involvement, promoting students' creative thinking in classroom interaction are the questioning's goal (Ma, 2008).

Meanwhile, Ellis (2008) proposes two reasons why teachers ask questions in their classroom. First, questions require responses; therefore they serve as a means of obliging learners to contribute to the interaction. Learners' responses also provide the teacher with feedback which can be used to adjust content and expression in subsequent teacher-talk. Second, questions serve as a device for controlling the progress of the interaction through which a lesson is enacted.

In line with this, questions can also be used to motivate students, to revise, control, test or assess, explore, explain, encourage students to focus on a particular

topic, elicit information, and check understanding and to control behavior (Young 1992; Richards and Lockhart 1994).

According to Smith and Higgins (2006), questioning serves as the principal way in which teachers control the classroom interaction. On the other hand, some studies have revealed that after lecturing, questioning is the most frequent strategies used by EFL/ESL teachers in the classroom (Ellis, 2003 ; Foster, 1998). Meanwhile, a study has been conducted by Yanfen and Yuqin (2010) on teacher talk in classroom interaction reveals that teachers initiate the interaction mostly by questioning.

Consequently, it can be concluded that teachers' questioning and classroom interaction cannot be separated. Questioning is used to check students' knowledge and understanding on the subject matter, to challenge students' creative thinking, and to get students involved more active in classroom interaction.

Considering the importance of questioning which takes place in the classroom interaction, as an English teacher either as EFL or ESL teacher should have a good knowledge and understanding about the questions itself. In line with this, language teachers who are well-aware of questioning skills can motivate their students to ask questions and to provide responses. Research indicates that almost 40% of classroom time is spent in question-response mode (Johnson, Markle, & Haley-Oliphant, 1987).

Nevertheless, Gall (1984) claims that many teachers do not ask questions effectively. In line with this, based on my prior interview to some EFL teachers in Makassar, I found that most students are not actively participated in classroom interaction, they do not sometimes give any responses on the questions asked, and

they tend to feel ashamed to ask or answer the questions given. Supporting this view, Husnaini (2005) found that the percentage of teacher talk is more than 60%. It shows that teachers mostly dominate the interaction in the classroom. Teachers' domination of classroom interaction can discourage the students to participate the students to participate and speak more in the target language.

In line with the above view, a common problem that EFL teachers are facing is to deal with a passive class, where students are unresponsive and avoid interaction with the teacher (Ma, 2008). This is especially true when a teacher seeks interaction in a teacher-class dialog, such as asking questions to the class as a whole, expecting at least one student to respond. This can be a frustrating experience for the two sides. Obviously, there will be time when no student can answer a teacher's question. However, students often are reluctant to make response even if they understand the questions, know the answers, and are able to produce the answers.

Concerning the explanation above, it can be said that engaging all students in the classroom, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to participate in class discussion, and challenging the important thinking when questions posed are some obstacles or problems faced by either EFL teachers or students in classroom interaction.

Thus, to overcome the obstacles, teachers must use a variety of questioning strategies to conduct diverse activities. To support this view, Tolfesson (1989) postulates that asking questions in EFL classroom requires knowledge of the types of questions, strategies, and the art of questioning. This article claims that teachers

should be trained to ask questions and have a good knowledge of questioning strategies in their classroom. On the other hand, developing a repertoire questioning strategies is one of the best ways to develop teachers' role as an initiator and sustainer of interaction (Brown, 2007).

Consequently, it can be concluded that to initiate and sustain the classroom interaction, teachers can apply various of questioning strategies in order to encourage students to be more actively involved and participated in classroom interaction.

Hence, this research will investigate the teachers' questioning strategies which are categorized into two groups; question-planning strategy and controlling strategy. Teacher's questioning strategies are most often employed to encourage and facilitate students' participation within these forms of interaction.

B. Problem Statement

Considering the description above, the research questions for this research are as follows:

1. What sort of questioning strategies does the teacher employ in classroom interaction?
2. How does the teachers apply their questioning strategies in classroom interaction?

C. Objectives of the Research

Based on research questions, the objectives of this research are:

1. To identify the questioning strategies employed by the teachers in classroom interaction.
2. To investigate the application of the questioning strategies in classroom interaction.

D. Significance of the Research

The result of this research will be expected to be useful either theoretically or practically. Theoretically, this research will give better understanding either for the writer or the reader about teacher's questioning, the importance of teacher's questioning, the functions, teacher's questions types, teacher's questioning strategies and techniques, and the role of questioning in classroom interaction.

Pedagogically, this research will provide some useful information about questioning strategies can be employed in classroom in order to gain students' responses, to check students' understanding, to engage students' participation in classroom interaction. It is also expected that as an EFL teacher use questioning more often to trigger students' level of thinking and their participation in the classroom, so that students' language proficiency can be improved. Applying different types of questions in the classroom will vary students' responses towards teacher's questions. It is also helping the weak students to be more engaged in the classroom participation.

Consequently, teachers should plan what questions they will ask their students, what the purposes of asking the questions, how they ask the questions in the classroom interaction.

E. Scope of the Research

This research is limited to the questioning strategies employed by teachers in classroom interaction. By discipline, this research is mostly all around sociolinguistic study that related to classroom interaction. By content, this research emphasizes on the investigation of questioning strategies employed by the EFL teachers in classroom interaction. By activity, the researcher did classroom observation and interview.